

Prince William County has a strong tradition of promoting art education and has been celebrating Youth Art Month for 29 years. The Virginia Art Education Association, working in concert with Prince Williams County Public Schools, selected "Start with Art, Learn for Life" as the 2007 theme and launched this year's celebration on March 10, 2007, by exhibiting student artwork on the Manassas Mall. This year's Youth Art Month saw tremendous participation from county elementary, middle, and high schools and highlighted the works of many talented student artists.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who contributed to making this year's Youth Art Month a success. I ask my colleagues to join me in applauding this group of remarkable young artists and congratulate them on a job well done.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Madam Speaker, I was absent from the House of Representatives last week due to the birth of my son, I would like to state how I would have voted on the following pieces of legislation if I had been able to be present:

H.R. 1873, to reauthorize the programs and activities of the Small Business Administration relating to procurement, and for other purposes, rollcall No. 319, "yea"; rollcall No. 320, "yea"; rollcall No. 321, "yea"; rollcall No. 322, "yea"; rollcall No. 323, "yea";

H.R. 1684 To authorize appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes, rollcall No. 314, "nay"; rollcall No. 315, "nay"; rollcall No. 316, "nay"; rollcall No. 317, "yea"; rollcall No. 318, "yea."

Ordering the Previous Question for H.R. 2082, Intelligence Authorization Act, rollcall No. 324, "nay."

Providing for the consideration of H.R. 2082, Intelligence Authorization Act, rollcall No. 325, "nay."

Providing for the consideration of H.R. 2237, H.R. 2206, and H.R. 2207, on ordering the previous question, rollcall No. 326, "nay."

Providing for the consideration of H.R. 2237, H.R. 2206, and H.R. 2207, on agreeing to the resolution rollcall No. 327, "nay"; on holding a secret session rollcall No. 328, "yea."

H.R. 2237, to provide for the redeployment of United States Armed Forces and defense contractors from Iraq, motion to recommit, rollcall No. 329, "yea"; on passage, rollcall No. 330, "nay"; on holding a secret session rollcall No. 331, "yea."

H.R. 2206, making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes, rollcall No. 332, "yea"; rollcall No. 333, "nay"; on motion to table the motion to hold a secret session, rollcall No. 334, "nay."

H.R. 2207, making supplemental appropriations for agricultural and other emergency assistance for the fiscal year ending September

30, 2007, on motion to recommit with instructions, rollcall No. 335, "nay"; on passage rollcall No. 336, "yea."

H.R. 2082, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2008 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes, rollcall No. 337, "yea"; rollcall No. 338, "yea"; rollcall No. 339, "nay"; motion to recommit, rollcall No. 340, "yea"; final passage, rollcall No. 341, "nay."

ENERGY SAVINGS AMENDMENT TO H.R. 1427

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing the "Energy Saving Mortgages Amendment" to H.R. 1427. This amendment calls on Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac work with lenders to quantify a household's monthly savings for purchasing an energy-efficient home or from living in a neighborhood providing transit and other transportation alternatives and shifts those savings into the "shelter" category of expenses. The amendment forces lenders to recognize the added purchasing power homebuyers generate by saving on energy and transportation costs. This allows the homebuyer, based on their enhanced buying power, either to qualify for a mortgage or to qualify for a larger mortgage.

By requiring lenders to quantify these savings, the amendment helps lower-income or first-time homebuyers qualify for mortgages to purchase homes located in transit-friendly locations or for homes that incorporate greater energy efficient building technologies. It also increases the lending ceiling for homebuyers purchasing a home in a neighborhood that allows for transportation savings from access to transit or other forms of transportation and for home buyers purchasing an energy efficient home.

THE COPS IMPROVEMENTS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 15, 2007

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of The C.O.P.S. Improvements Act of 2007, H.R. 1700. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation that would allow The Community Oriented Policing Services (C.O.P.S.) program to hire an additional 50,000 police officers to walk the beat in our local communities.

The creation of the C.O.P.S. program was a breakthrough in law enforcement. By funding additional officers, critical technologies, and valuable training, C.O.P.S. has been a catalyst

for the revolutionary shift to community policing. However, limits on hiring new officers has hindered the ability of the C.O.P.S. program to address the rise in violent crime.

Between 1995 and 2005, the C.O.P.S. program helped put 117,000 additional officers on the beat across every state and in most communities in our Nation. Unfortunately, in 2006 the then Republican-led Congress decided to eliminate the ability of this program to help hire additional law enforcement officers. This was a tragic mistake.

According to the General Accountability Office "C.O.P.S. funded increases in sworn officers per capita were associated with the declines in rates of total index crimes, violent crimes, and property crimes." The same GAO study showed that between the years of 1998 and 2000, C.O.P.S. hiring grants were responsible for reducing crime by about 200,000 to 225,000 incidents—one third of which were violent.

It is appropriate that in the wake of the tragic events at Virginia Tech, we are reauthorizing the C.O.P.S. program and restoring the program's ability to help local law enforcement agencies hire additional police officers. Earlier this week, I met with state and local law enforcement officials, school safety officers, and gun control advocacy organizations to learn what more the Federal Government should be doing to prevent gun crime. All the participants understood the importance of the C.O.P.S. program and the positive effect that community oriented policing has had on crime rates.

Across the state of New Jersey, approximately 4,790 officers were hired by local police departments using C.O.P.S. funds. This meant an additional 628 police officers and/or sheriff deputies walking the beat in the local communities of my Congressional District. Further, 33 school resource officers were hired to ensure that our children's schools are safe.

A Congressional Report, indicates that when The C.O.P.S. Improvements Act of 2007 becomes law there will be 268 more police officers on the beat, approximately \$13 million more for law enforcement grants, 14 additional school resource officers, and an additional \$3.6 million in technology grants for law enforcement officers in the 12th Congressional District.

This legislation has been endorsed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriff's Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Police Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National League of Cities.

The C.O.P.S. program and community policing have put us on the right track. The police chiefs and sheriffs in my district consistently tell me that we could have never achieved this much without the additional officers and technology funded under the COPS program.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot afford to under fund this program anymore. The COPS program has been vital to our local communities. Our police departments can do only so much with the resources they are given. At a time when we are asking our law enforcement officers to do more to reduce crime and protect our hometowns from potential terrorist related threats we should do everything we can to increase the funding of the COPS program. H.R. 1700 is an essential first step.